

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01419 161649Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00  
SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 MCT-01 HA-05 AID-05 CCO-00  
FBOE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSC-05 SP-02  
OC-06 OPR-02 PA-01 USSS-00 CA-01 A-01 SCS-06  
OMB-01 SS-15 SY-05 NEAE-00 /098 W  
-----008812 161702Z /40

O R 161600Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7125  
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER  
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM  
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG  
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER  
COMSIXTHFLT  
CTF SIX ZERO  
CTF SIX ONE  
CTF SIX TWO  
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO  
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA  
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN  
DIA WASHDC  
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER  
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1419

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE  
SUBJ: ISRAELI AIR ATTACK ON AL AWZA'I

REF: BEIRUT 1403 (DTG 161125Z MAR 78)

1. MORNING OF MARCH 16, EMBOFFS VISITED AL AWZA'I AREA, WHERE  
ISRAELIS HAD BOMBED DAY BEFORE, AND OBSERVED THE FOLLOWING.  
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 01419 161649Z

2. ISRAELI BOMBS HIT IN MIDDLE OF POOR RESIDENTIAL AREA DUE  
WEST OF NORTHERN END OF MAIN NORTH-SOUTH RUNWAY OF BEIRUT  
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, BETWEEN THE BEACH AND THE COAST ROAD  
(33 50N 35 28E). DAMAGE WAS EXTENSIVE. THERE APPEARED TO BE FEW  
HOUSES STANDING IN A ZONE APPROX 300 METERS LONG AND 150 METERS  
WIDE. (THE PHALANGIST VOICE OF LEBANON SAID 50 HOUSES HAD BEEN

DESTROYED). ARMED MEN, PRESUMABLY FATAH FEDAYEEN, WERE GUARDING THE AREA.

3. AUH HAS NOW ADMITTED A TOTAL OF TWELVE CASUALTIES: ONE LABANESE WOMAN DEAD ON ARRIVAL AND ELEVEN PEOPLE WOUNDED: ONE 13-YEAR OLD PALESTINIAN GIRL, NINE LEBANESE, AND ONE PERSON WHO DID NOT GIVE HIS NATIONALITY. Wafa in a bulletin on March 15 said that "two children were killed and ten women and children wounded." A PLO official told a local medical official March 16 that 37 people were killed and 50 wounded, almost all of whom were Lebanese civilians. The Voice of Lebanon reported that the removal of debris in the area was continuing and that nine bodies were found March 15 under the debris and that three other bodies were still buried there. Beirut Press March 16 front-paged pictures of destruction.

4. According to Minister of Public Works Amin Bizri and to Air Force Colonel Adnan al-Khalil, a Shia' originally from near Awza', the area is inhabited by Palestinians, Lebanese and Kurds (with the Palestinians the most numerous), who had earlier been driven from their homes in Tel Zataar, Qarantina and South Lebanon.

5. There has been considerable speculation in Beirut about why the Israelis chose this particular target. There is a stone breakwater in front of the area which could be used for launching

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 01419 161649Z

boats. (Emboffs saw no evident damage to the breakwater.) A Datt source reported that the PLO frequently used the beach area inside the breakwater to launch small boats (see IR 6 857 0072 78). The Voice of Lebanon said that the Israelis had bombed the area because it had a Palestinian radio station. The Voice of Lebanon also quoted Israeli sources as saying that there was a Palestinian maintenance base in the area.

6. Comment. Whatever the intention, the result of the Israeli attack has been to kill and injure a number of innocent civilians, both Lebanese and Palestinian, and to diminish significantly in the eyes of many Lebanese the moral justification for the Israeli intervention in Lebanon.

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NNN



## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
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